

AT SIXTY-FIVE.

[Ella W. Postriv in The Current.]

Sixty-five is not so very old. No, indeed!

If one is still straight, with a serviceable eye and a tolerable hearing, in addition to a well-filled pocket book, why, what is 65?

To count sixty-five distinct summers, and sixty-five mellow autumns, that drowse into peaceful winters and awaken in refreshing springs, is a great privilege. Think of the accumulation of ideas and experiences, of friends and memories. A rare age, surely, to be enjoyed in spite of rheumatic twinges.

Maj. Weatherbeam, buttoning his elegant fall overcoat about him as he strode down the avenue under the maples, was sure he would not give his ripe perfection for the callow and tasteless experience of the past. He smiled up at the bright foliage, and knocked the head off a straggling aster in his complacency. He found a dime for a little boy peeping, wide-eyed, into a candy-shop, and stood still to watch the urchin as he bolted for the door, and nodded in good fellowship to a woman who watched with him amused. The major's little terrier followed, for once, quite unrebuked, and turned with him up a broad macadamized street at the right. The firm stride traversed two blocks quickly, and paused before a brown stone mansion, with a pine-dotted lawn in front. One naturally puffs a little at the end of a long walk, whether one is 65 or not, and if by nature discreet, pauses awhile to regain the breath before venturing to call on ladies. Any tidy man will dust his clothes a little with his handkerchief, and twist his moustache a trifle when he wishes to look well. The major presses the bell beside the stately door, and stands erect. A little pause follows, in which he listens to the wind running the gamut of elfin melody in those grouped pines; then the heavy doors unfold, a salute no younger man could imitate; an inquiry, and closed doors again, with the major inside. The mansion is divided in quarters by two huge halls, and a wide fireplace gives forth a glorious radiation of heat and light over the statues and frescoed walls. The major seats himself before the blaze, and counts the tiles and decipher the inscriptions about the mantel. There is a rustle of silk skirts, and a tap of feet on the oak stairs. The major rises, with a sudden rush of blood to the head—not apoplectic, surely—and salutes the red-draped figure through the interstices of the balustrade.

He handed the lady down the last steps, and led her across the hall, while a green parrot hopped at her heels.

"Miss Margery"—his voice was like a violoncello—"it is not usual for a business man like myself to call on a lady of an afternoon."

"Therefore, sir, is the honor all the greater," pouting one toe on the fender to aid her balance in the high-seated leather chair.

"Therefore is the need great, my dear young lady!"

"Oh! ha! ha! ha!" in musical staccato from the high-back chair. At 65 one is too dignified to like such a laugh in connection with one's self.

"Yes, Miss Wheatcroft, I felt I could not, in justice to you or myself, remain longer without confessing to you my attitude toward you."

"Oh, how kind of you," very sincerely. "I looked—I looked for you all day yesterday, sir"—a little hurriedly, with the red deepening about the dimples.

The major's head gave an involuntary jerk. Girls were, once, more decorous. His deceased Julia Ann would never have shown such impulsiveness. Yet it must be confessed 'twas extremely flattering; and then, good heavens, what eyes! The apoplectic symptoms returned.

"Miss Margery, how gracious of you to say so. I'm sure I never hoped—"

"Yes, and I was making all sorts of plans for us two. Poll, come down! Major, she's trying to pull your hair! Look out, sir; she'll scratch you! Here, give her to me! There, Miss Poll, you sit on my chair. You can't pull my hair, because I don't reach up high enough—ha! ha! ha!—eh, major?" her teeth gleaming out in the glow from the cedar fire. "Yes, I am thinking, you see, how proud I should be of you. You are so tall, and—now, don't mind, for I'm going to flatter you all the rest of your days—and so handsome! And how proud I hoped you would be of me!" (A half-rising attitude on the part of the major, who is forgetting decorum, and how girls were 40 years ago.)

"Oh, major, you are finding the blaze too hot. How stupid of me to let you roast in that manner. Here, let me put up the screen. Isn't it a pretty one? I embroidered it myself. See, it represents an Italian princess under an archway. I think she looks a trifle like your son, Ned, only, of course, he's not done in Kensington. Well, I was planning that once in a while, on very grand occasions, you might take me out with you—"

"Once in a while, madam!" The major was a vast substantial protest.

"Oh, I know, of course, what you think you have to say. But don't do it. Besides, we wouldn't leave Ned behind very often." A lurking laugh in the corners of two brown eyes. "Or, he might go with Aunt Maria, eh? Oh—o—o—o!"

The major couldn't see anything funny in that common-place arrangement.

"My dear Miss Margery"—(Confound those chairs! A man couldn't move them an inch without getting red in the face, they are so heavy.)—"you are surely determined to defraud me of my share of the conversation, though I am not tell you how relieved I am to find you prepared to receive my overtures. I confess there were moments when I feared you might be less fond of me on account of the disparity of our ages—"

"Why, goodness, it wouldn't seem half so lovely any other way! That's just the nicest part of it!" How that presumptuous firelight clambered up from her little feet to the dimples in her hands and the rosy folds about her neck, and climbing still, stopped at her rosiest lips! Her last sentence, and the firelight stopping right there, where it did, made the major gasp.

"This is one of the most delightful surprises of my life," he went on, when he could speak. "I want to tell you how

gladly I shall strive to gratify each wish that you can make; how truly proud I shall be of my beautiful young—"

"Oh, stop! You praise me more than I can ever deserve." Two timid tears showed through the gathering gloom. "I never dared hope you would receive me so tenderly. I am a coming right over there, sir—and right behind your chair—so—on my tip-toes, and—put one—little kiss—like that—on your dear old forehead."

The major grew more agile than he had been for twenty years. Meanwhile Poll had got to screaming. "Lord! lord! lord! lord!" and would not leave off.

"Oh, yes, I'm so thankful you like me! And we will be so happy together, won't we? And we both are grateful, I assure you. Here's the ring he gave me. See! Two beautiful pearls and that twinkling diamond. Doesn't it look charming in the firelight? Ned said—don't think me silly for telling you—that if you are satisfied with the little wife he had chosen he believed he would go half mad with joy. But really I didn't think he'd tell you so soon, for he felt a little timid about it." A long pause, during which the major relaxes his fatherly embrace somewhat. Then a venture from the girl: "I'm afraid I've talked too freely with you! Or perhaps you feel sad when you remember Ned is going to belong to me!" The head bows so low that the light climbs to that now. "But we'll live somewhere near you, and see you every day. Why, must you be going? Can't you stay to tea. Well, button up your coat well. Now, please give your new child one more kiss, to tell her that you mean all you have said. Good-bye! Good-bye!" "Lord! lord! lord! lord! lord!"

How that bird screams. The wind has risen very fast, and the pines strike at each other angrily. There is a promise of a dismal rain, and the dusk hides all of the autumn's beauty, and leaves only its leaflessness apparent.

Sixty-five, sixty-five! At that age it is hard climbing a hill in the teeth of the wind!

The Old Geographical Bugaboo.

[World of Wonders.]

The most celebrated of whirlpools is that called the Maelstrom, which lies to the southward of the Lofoden islands, off the coast of Norway, near a large rock in the middle of the strait dividing the islands of Vær and Moskenes. It is produced by the conflicting currents of one of the great Norwegian fjords. There are most extraordinary and romantic legends concerning the Maelstrom, but careful observations have shown that the peril has been magnified.

At flood or ebb tide in summer it offers no danger even to small boats. But in winter, and during stormy weather, even large ships and steamers do not dare to venture near it. At certain states of the wind and tide during this season the whole stream boils in mighty whirls, against which the largest vessels would contend in vain.

These whirling waters would not suck vessels down in their vortex, however, as formerly believed, but would infallibly dash them on the rocks, or, in case of small ships, swamp them with water. The imagination of Edgar A. Poe, which painted a descent into the Maelstrom, had no hold on facts whereupon to delineate his marvelous picture. Stripped, however, of its fictitious dangers, the Maelstrom is still a gruesome fact, and the Norwegian fishing-boats are careful to give it a wide berth except in very smooth and pleasant weather, when the tide is just right. This is rather a disagreeable necessity, as it is said that the Maelstrom and its vicinity furnishes a favorite feeding-ground for the largest and finest specimens of the finny.

Mankind's Hygienic Mistakes.

[Health Journal.]

It is a mistake to labor when you are not in fit condition to do so.

To conclude that the smallest room in the house is large enough to sleep in.

To think that the more a person eats the healthier and stronger he will become.

To take off proper clothing out of season because you have become heated.

To imagine that if a little work or exercise is good, violent and prolonged exercise is better.

To think that any nostrum or patent medicine is a specific for all diseases flesh is heir to.

To go to bed at midnight and rise at day-break, and imagine that every hour taken from sleep is an hour gained.

To believe that children can do as much as grown people, and that the more hours they study the more they can learn.

To eat as if you only had a minute to finish the meal in, or to eat without appetite, or continue after it has been satisfied, merely to satisfy the taste.

To imagine that whatever remedy causes one to feel immediately better—as alcoholic stimulants—is good for the system without regard to after effects.

Camphor-Making in Japan.

[Druggist.]

Camphor is made in Japan in this way: After a tree is felled to the earth it is cut up into chips, which are laid in a tub or a large iron pot partially filled with water, and placed over a slow fire. Through holes in the bottom of the tub steam slowly rises, and, heating the chips generates oil and camphor. Of course, the tub with the chips has a closely fitting cover. From this cover a bamboo pipe leads to a succession of other tubs with bamboo connections, and the last of these tubs is divided into two compartments, one above the other, the dividing floor being perforated with small holes to allow the water and oil to pass to the lower compartment. The upper compartment is supplied with a straw layer, which catches and holds the camphor in crystal in deposit as it passes to the cooling process. The camphor is then separated from the straw, packed in wooden tubs and is ready for market. The oil is used by the natives for illuminating and other purposes.

Starved for Salt.

[Chicago Journal.]

So important have French academicians found salt to be that animals fed on flesh deprived of its saline qualities died of starvation. There was plenty of nutriment in the food, but there was no medium for its solution and absorption and hence it was useless.

A BIRD FANCIER.

Chats with a Reporter About Pets That Talk and Sing.

The Demand for Canaries, Parrots, Robins, and Mocking Birds—Training a Pekin Robin to Sing.

[Washington Post.]

"Walk in, sir; walk in," followed by a discordant burst of laughter, was the invitation tendered a reporter one morning, as he was walking up the avenue a few squares from the capitol. Turning sharply around, he failed to discern anyone on the sidewalk or on the thresholds of the neighboring houses, and was consequently somewhat puzzled. A glance upward, however, quickly solved the mystery. Hanging in a rough-looking cage, suspended from a first-story window of a combination store, was a Mexican parrot. The combination consisted of a window full of bird cages and birds, interspersed with coats, trousers, and vests. In other words, the parrot belonged to an old man who made clothes and sold birds for a living. The window, from a bird point of view, recalled the words of Charles Dickens, in "Martin Chuzzlewit": "In every pane of glass there was at least one tiny bird in a tiny cage, twittering and hopping his little ballet of despair, and knocking his head against the roof; while one unhappy goldfinch, who lived outside a red villa with his name on the door, drew the water for his own drinking and mutely appealed to some good man to drop a farthing's worth of poison in it." British birds, they say, are inseparable from low associations, and they are always to be found in poor and immoral neighborhoods in this country, fortunately, the reverse is true.

Dropping all thoughts of Dickens and British birds, the reporter entered the store while the parrot gave a louder laugh than before. On a table behind the window the reporter found a gray-headed man of rather plethoric proportions seated cross-legged and busily engaged in sewing buttons on a diagonal coat, while around and about him were birds from almost every clime. The canaries sang, the parrots screamed and talked, the robins twittered, and the mocking-birds whistled merrily, making the place literally alive with music. "I have not many birds now," said the old man, "but such as they are they are marketable."

"Yes," said the lady of the house, who had just entered after taking the parrot in from the upper story, "we have canaries and parrots here to supply all probable demands, and besides you see we are not short of robins or mocking-birds."

"What species of birds are most in demand?"

"Canaries, of course; they are easily kept and their sweet notes go far to cheer and enliven many a household. Then again they are long-lived, many of them surviving 20 or 25 years. I have known a canary to sing when certainly not less than 24 years old; that, however, is an exception."

"Do you sell imported as well as domestic birds?"

"We sell a few of the latter, but the majority of people want canaries of the Harz mountain species. Those are imported and bring prices from \$2.50 to \$5.00 each, while the cages range from \$1.00 to \$5.00."

"What about parrots?"

"It all depends upon their age and speaking qualities. They sell from \$8 to \$40. The best coming here are the gray African and the double yellow head from Mexico comes next; Brazil follows next in order, and then comes the little West India parrot. Some of the latter make remarkably good speakers. We feed them on corn, sunflower seed, hemp seed, bread, etc. They will eat nothing that will injure them."

"How do the mocking-birds stand in public estimation?"

"Almost as high as the canaries and parrots, and after the mocking-bird comes the robin. We get the majority of mocking-birds from Havana, but still many come from Virginia. Young birds sell from \$5 to \$15 each. Like children, mocking-birds and parrots must be trained when young."

"That little fellow yonder," said the bird fancier, "is a regular acrobat." He pointed, as he spoke, at a Japanese robin which was indulging in every conceivable kind of contortion in his cage. He jumped from perch to perch with lightning rapidity, then sang a sweet song, and wound up the act by standing on his head. "We have a good demand for robins," said the old man, "but nothing like that concerning the parrots and canaries. For myself, I like the robin as well as the best of them."

In all lands he is a favorite, and he sings as sweetly caged as in his wild state. Wordsworth, I am told, was an ardent admirer of the bird. The Pekin robin would not sing when young, but the old saying has it that a bird that won't sing and can't make to sing. We therefore train the Pekin youngsters by placing a songster within hearing distance. When he learns a little all you have to do is to place a Chinaman in front of him. He recognizes his country at a glance and puts forth his best efforts."

The Colored Race at the Exposition

[Nashville American.]

One of the most interesting features of the World's industrial exposition at New Orleans will be the department devoted to an exposition of the work and progress of the colored race. The identification of the colored race with the material progress and the development of the great natural resources of the south, and the influence of so large a portion of her population upon her prosperity, renders this demonstration of her educational and industrial progress and advancement eminently appropriate. This unique exhibition, for its novelty, will possess a peculiar interest, especially to European and northern visitors. There are many quaint and ingenious specimens of handiwork for which the colored race are noted. Some of them are very expert mechanics. The shuck horse-collars, baskets and split-bottom chairs, rolls of perique tobacco, gourd banjos, etc., will constitute the native curios of the cotton country.

He Reasoned Well.

[New York Mail and Express.]

Little Dick had two apples given him. You ought to let your little sister have one of these," suggested his mother.

"Where is she?"

"She is asleep."

"Noh, I guess I'll eat 'em bo'f myself. What good'd a napple do her if she's asleep?"

Russian Peasant's Love.

The horse of a Russian peasant is first in his estimation; then comes his cow; then his dog, then his pig, and if he has any left it is bestowed upon his wife and children.

TRADING WITH CONGO.

The Curious Manner in Which Affairs are Conducted There.

[Ex-Consul's Letter in Boston Budget.]

To settle at Congo, after having chosen a convenient location, the chiefs who are entitled to receive the duties or taxes are called; these taxes are in reality rents, as the negroes do not sell their lands and do not give them up, except for an annual monthly payment. The tenant has, therefore, a right to his land just as long as he pays his tax or rent, which consists, besides the payment of installation, also that of rations to the king, amounting to a gallon of rum and eight yards of cotton cloth at the end of every month, and the people that the king is obliged to supply, and for whom he is responsible. The people that the king is obliged to supply are: Lingster (translator, comprador (purchaser), mafuca (body servant) and four servants (moccas). If one of these seven personages should for any reason whatever run away, the king is obliged to return him or replace him, if not he loses all rights to his rations, taxes, etc., until he has replaced the runaway or paid the amount stolen, if the departure be in consequence of a robbery.

The manners and customs which have been introduced by certain Europeans to the negroes have rendered it impossible to trade with the natives without the corridors (trade runners); these act as couriers who, for a certain payment, furnished with a supply of gin and spirits, waylay the natives along the routes they take when bringing in produce for trade, conducting them to the employer's factory. It often occurs that the negroes follow these corridors of their own free will; but it also happens that when the negroes will not follow them, they bind them and oblige them to go to the house of their employers. When the corridor knows there is not a certain kind of goods at his factory, and conducts the negroes or trade to another merchant's factory, he is in like manner bound by the slaves of his employer, for although slavery is said to be abolished, there is plenty of it to be found.

Some of the slaves are in chains and others at liberty in the Portuguese houses, and also in some foreign houses. The corridor becomes the slave of the white man unless his family is willing to pay an exorbitant price for his liberty. These abuses and violence are very often the cause of the closing of trade-routes, as the natives, alarmed at the constant violence of the Kroboys straggling along the routes, who hinder their free circulation, have almost abandoned the Congo, and sell their produce where they can move about freely, or remain in their villages, where they cultivate only what is requisite and sufficient for their families. It is on account of violence and injustice that the Congo, from being only ten years ago one of the most productive rivers, has been, comparatively speaking, abandoned by the natives.

The purchase of slaves continues at the value of 5 or 6 pounds sterling each. When they are not bought they are obtained in the following manner: An article is laid apparently out of the way, but within reach of the negro, who steals it at once, and being taken in flagrante delicto, becomes at once a slave. If he is a person of importance, and is claimed by his relatives or by the chiefs of the village to which he belongs, he is sometimes given up in exchange for two or three substitutes who become slaves in their village, and are put in chains and made to work under the lash and rod. Therefore, should any government seriously wish to correct or avoid any further slavery and secure free trade, in order that the Congo should again be productive to commerce, as it was about ten or fifteen years ago, reforms must be made in the abuses mentioned above.

Wilbur F. Storey.

[Cor. Indianapolis Sentinel.]

I recall an occasion one day ten years ago when I went to Wilbur F. Storey with business in hand which required prompt attention. His eyes swept over the pages of certain documents I handed him to read, while he at the same time heard and answered two or three of his staff who successively came in for instructions. "You say you leave at 8:30 to-morrow morning; please call here on your way to the train and I will give you your answer," he said. At 3 in the morning I called. He was as actively at work as when I saw him fifteen hours before. Is it any wonder that to-day his mind is gone? The Times was his idol. To make it the first paper of the west was his one ambition. He succeeded. He stamped upon it the impress of his energy, his enterprise, his independence, his utter fearlessness, his progressiveness. He built for himself a monument which men who assisted in its construction are preserving in the spirit he set them. But he wots not of the work his hands have wrought, and though hundreds are beneficiaries of it he can only consume from its large earnings the pittance required for buying the plain food which doctors prescribe, and which an attendant ladies into his mouth as a nurse feeds a weanling child.

Rheumatism and Diet.

[Cor. Cassell's Magazine.]

Rheumatism is as often as not, caused by over-eating, and especially by over-indulgence in meat, which is certain to cause an excess of uric acid, and render the body liable, on exposure to wet or cold, to an attack. We know that old people are proverbially liable to rheumatism. The reasons for this are not far to seek. One is that joints and ligaments are harder and stiffer, and very often contain deposit—urate of soda. Another is that, as a rule, people up in years eat more than is necessary to support life, under the mistaken notion that they want a deal of nourishment to keep them up. I say that, on the contrary, the wear and tear of tissue is but trifling compared to what it is in earlier manhood, and that far less food is required. Therefore, if an elderly person would live long and be free of aches and pains, and be calm in mind—for that is a great desideratum—he or she must live abstemiously, more or less.

Potato Bug Poison.

According to The Druggan potatoes do not absorb the arsenical preparations used for destroying the Colorado beetle, but the productiveness of the soil is impaired by the use of arsenic.

The Mind in Medicine.

[Rev. Dr. C. A. Bartol.]

Man is in danger of having the disorders he imagines and picture to himself. Luke tells us that when Jesus was about to cast out the devils, which were diseases, he suffered them not to speak. A physician in my circle made it a condition of marriage that his wife should not read a medical book. My old friend King came into the house one day and said he was sick. He then sat down at the table and broke out laughing, saying he was only hungry. Had he at once been told that he was threatened with typhus fever and put to bed by an alarmed woman and seriously treated as if sick he would, I am sure, have had a run of fever instead of going out as he did in the afternoon into the woods. Just such a power as this has our fancy in bringing on diseases."

"My minister," said one "at funerals so dwells on all the apparently gloomy aspects of the scene, and so harrows up our feelings and clouds us with grief that he cannot be trusted with the corpse."

The poet Bryant bids us go forth into nature when thoughts of the last bitter hour come over us, and the Apostle Paul tell us to think only of whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report. The power of thought and mind is the great specific for bodily preservation. How many we have known like those American Psalmists, Dana, Bryant and Emerson, so frail-looking, but not infirm at 70, while younger giants fell about them. The power of thought and mind preserved their physical beings.

A physician should always be a man of pure morals and character, for none other were fitted to treat the sick. A spirit of beneficence, kindness and light should always radiate from the physician's person, and he should always endeavor to console and encourage, and never discourage a patient.

Bridge Over the Straits of Messina.

[Iron Age.]

In the exhibition now open at Turin, says a foreign exchange, the directors of the Novara & Pino railway show the drawings and plans for the projected bridge over the straits of Messina. The narrowest portion of the straits is two miles across, but the depth there is 5214 feet, while the shallowest part, which is 361 feet deep, runs between Cap del Pezzo and Granziere. Although the distance across the latter point is half a mile greater than at the narrowest portion of the straits, its greater shallowness has caused it to be selected as the spot for the bridge.

In addition to a double line of rails, it is intended to make the bridge wide enough to include a road for ordinary carriage traffic. The viaduct will be supported by two land towers and three piers, each 3,280 feet apart. The foundation of the three piers will be constructed of granite ballast up to within seventy-five and one-half feet of the surface of the water, and of granite masonry, the latter being carried to thirty-three feet above the water. The bridge will terminate on either shore in tower-shaped piers, constructed also of granite with the ordinary dry foundations. The height of the bridge above the water will be 398 feet. The entire upper portion of the bridge is to be built of steel, and the construction is to be carried out in the same way as the bridge over the Mississippi at St. Louis.

Crossing the Atlantic in the Air.

[Interview with Aeronaut Coxwell.]

Asked his opinion as to the worth of certain unfulfilled promises on the part of American aeronauts, Mr. Coxwell remarked: "I never pay much regard to these stories of Yankee origin—they are generally so outrageous as to be beyond belief. But," he went on, "as to the crossing of the Atlantic in a balloon, I think it is possible. I am not as sure as the American aeronauts to whom you refer, a believer in the existence of a current at two miles high which would carry the balloon across the ocean; I disproved that notion at the time it was so persistently propagated, for I showed that up to two miles there existed uniformity, and that if any preference at all was distinguishable on the part of the wind, it was in the direction of north to south, instead of from west to east. Still, if the requisite amount of money was available, I hold the feat of crossing the Atlantic is possible. I would, however, have no sensationalism attach to the attempt; the ridiculous part of the American schemes has been the advertised determination to depart on a fixed day. If I were to undertake the enterprise I would get a large, sound silk balloon, equip it carefully, and choose a proper moment for departure, changing the time of sailing from day to day if the conditions of the atmosphere did not serve. I think it could be done."

The Chinese Baby's First Shave.

[Portland Oregonian.]

When a Chinese boy is one month old his head is shaved and a bladder is drawn over it, and as his head grows the bladder bursts and the cue sprouts forth. The first shave is made the occasion of a magnificent banquet, and the guests are expected to make the host a handsome present in coin for the newly-shaven baby, with which a bank account is started to his credit. This is the most pleasant feature of the affair for a baby, as the razor always pulls and he cannot take part in the feast.

Tobacco as a Medicine.

[Chicago Herald.]

Gen. T. L. Clingman, of North Carolina, continues steadfast and enthusiastic in his faith in tobacco as a panacea for the "ills that flesh is heir to," and reports several new cases in which remarkable cures of dropsy, sore throat, corns, warts, etc., have been effected by the application of tobacco-leaf compresses.

A Pupil in History.

[French Joke.]

Teacher—How many wars were waged with Spain? Pupil—Six. Teacher—Enumerate them. Pupil—One, two, three, four, five, six.

Van Rysselberghe of Belgium has succeeded in transmitting a telegraphic and a telephonic message along the same wire at the same time.

The tallest tree in California is 450 feet high, and the largest in circumference measures ninety-four feet.